

FCAFA Proceedings - 12 April 2023

Present: Ron Lembo (chair and Professor of Sociology), Matt McGann (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, ex officio), Cate Zolkos (Dean of Admission, ex officio), Gail Holt (Dean of Financial Aid, ex officio), Sonya Clark (Professor of Art and Art History), Maria Heim (Professor of Religion), Jill Miller (Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies), Nicholas Torres '24, Jalen Woodard '23, Loretta Alarcon '24

1. Review of Support for Matriculated Students

- a. In the context of test-optional decisions being made in the coming months, faculty members shared some thoughts from the previous meeting about keeping track of the ways that faculty and administration can support students once they matriculate here

2. Survey to Assess Thriving on Campus

- a. The Office of Admission would like to offer a survey for faculty (and maybe staff or other campus members) to learn more about what they think “thriving” means for students at Amherst.
 - i. Could ask professors to provide examples of 1-2 students they’ve taught in the last few years who thrived in the classroom setting and what were the characteristics that really distinguished them
 - ii. Could ask current students about experiences they have on campus that help them feel like they’re thriving (could be academic, could be extracurricular)
- b. The goal would be to offer a focused question that could help Admission Office staff learn more about the kinds of students that faculty see as well-equipped to navigate Amherst once they get here, and see if that helps us learn anything about the kinds of students who would thrive here
- c. There would also be a question of when would be a good time to present this survey – in the late spring, or early fall – in order to best set up the Admission Office to be able to actually use the information gleaned from the survey

3. Humanities versus STEM Focus at Amherst

- a. Across the board, STEM majors are increasing, but it’s also the case at Amherst
- b. In the past, STEM faculty have hoped for more students who might pursue PhD programs or terminal degrees rather than medical degrees or pre-professional approaches to the sciences
- c. Humanities professors, especially in departments that receive less attention in the first place, have experienced the obvious difference in class sizes and number of students majoring in humanities departments